



# RAQUETTE LAKE NEWS

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## *Rhonda K. Jacobs* ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF CENTER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION

After a six-month national search, Rhonda K. Jacobs was named SUNY Cortland's new assistant director of the Center for Environmental and Outdoor Education. She began her duties in May 2003 coordinating the activities at the Antlers Center. In addition, she assists the director in the operation and the administration of SUNY Cortland's four outdoor education centers.

Jacobs comes to the position with a considerable amount of experience and understanding. Previously, she taught outdoor and environmental education and was program coordinator for conferences at Frost Valley YMCA. Some additional experiences include: adjunct lecturer in recreation and leisure studies at SUNY Cortland; before school director and after school assistant director at the Dryden School Age Child Care Program; summer camp counselor/facilitator at Club Getaway, Kent, Conn.; director of the Cornell Sports Youth Day Camp in Ithaca, N.Y.; and accounting office and service desk associate at Wal-Mart, Cortland, N.Y. Rhonda graduated from Dryden High School and Tompkins-Cortland Community College. She enrolled as a non-traditional student at SUNY Cortland in the recreation and leisure studies program graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation Education. In 2001, the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department faculty elected her to be a recipient of the John A. MacPhee Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded to sophomores, juniors and seniors with high academic achievement and professional promise. Rhonda served as a recreation intern at Raquette Lake during the summer of 2001. She returned to work at Camp Huntington in the summer of 2002. During this time, she and Jesse Arno, an intern, were the two individuals primarily responsible for the interior renovation of the historic Kirby Camp.

Rhonda's pleasant personality and attention to detail has ensured a smooth transition from Jay Cummings' 32 years of service at the Antlers Center to the present time. During her first season, she has gotten to know and work with many SUNY Cortland alumni. She is also working with Auxiliary Services Corporation to ensure all groups have a good learning experience and living environment at the Antler's. She is highly skilled and motivated and will work diligently to continue the Raquette Lake legacy of excellence.

## SECOND ANNUAL WINTER ALUMNI SESSION

It is not too late to enroll in the 2004 Winter Alumni Session at Camp Huntington. The session begins on Sunday, January 25, and ends Thursday, January 29, 2004. At this point, we have nearly 30 individuals signed up for this session. Last year, we had a fantastic time and I do not see this year being any different. If you are interested in attending or just wish additional information, please call (607) 753 5488.

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## CORTLAND ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Once again, the Cortland Alternative High had its bi-annual



visit to Camp Huntington during September. The trip serves as both an educational experience and orientation program for faculty and students. The three days at Raquette Lake are deemed extremely important by both students and staff.

Unfortunately, due to budget constraints in the school system, the students had to incur the expense of this educational experience on their own. Each of these students earned and solicited money so they could participate in this outdoor adventure. One example of the impact of their Raquette Lake experience is best reflected in a short story about how one former participant who raised \$1,000 to help this year's students. He accomplished this through pledges and a one-man bike-a-thon. Without this individual's support and the contributions of many others, 36 students would not have been able to come this year.

It is not all fun and games for these students while they are here. The faculty has developed a program which focuses on academic subject matter in conjunction with the unique natural environment. In addition to the traditional outdoor activities Huntington is famous for, these students participate in art

projects, instructional workshops, Adirondack history and architecture, and team building and problem solving. As the director for the various outdoor facilities, I observe many different groups and their programs. I can honestly say that the Cortland Alternative High School's faculty has done an excellent job in providing a quality experience for their students. Both the students and the staff are to be commended. I am looking forward to seeing them again in 2005!

## NEW HARTFORD HIGH SCHOOL

For more than 30 years, the students studying ecology at New Hartford High School have enjoyed their semi-annual trip to Raquette Lake. The program was started by Cortland alum, Doug Pens, in the early 1980s. The current coordinator of this program, Jamie McNair, was a former student at New Hartford. As a high school student, the Raquette Lake experience left a lasting impression that he continues to hold today.

The New Hartford students learn and develop a variety of educational initiatives during their stay at Pine Knot. In addition to the traditional outdoor skills they also participate in the following activities: orienteering and global positioning system; team building and problem solving; wildlife ecology; Adirondack history; creative writing; and maintaining a personal journal. The leadership torch has been passed. Under McNair's direction, the ecology program and its tradition of excellence remains strong. Jamie and the staff are doing a very good job of preparing and working with these gifted students. I am looking forward to their return visit this winter.

## KAYAKING AND WIND SURFING CAMP

Once again, Dale Anderson, a faculty member of the Recreation and Leisure Studies Department at SUNY Cortland, delivered a Kayaking and Wind Surfing Camp during the October break at Camp Huntington. Cortland students from a variety of majors and a few area teachers participated in the event. Dale taught the basic skills in the classroom and then the group went outside and applied what they had discussed.

Although the weather left much to be desired, the group did not let it dampen their zeal. They endured the cool weather and the rain. The winds were almost too gusty. The back bay was sheltered from the southern winds so that is where much of the outdoor instruction took place.

The students put their kayaking skills to use when they headed for Lonesome Bay to camp for the night. The next day they portaged their kayaks across Indian Point. They then paddled across Sucker Brook Bay to the trail head of West Mountain. After climbing West Mountain, they paddled back to camp. Needless to say, they were very hungry and quite tired. Not too many took advantage of the sauna that night!

Dale did a fantastic job and the participants had a great time. I am sure some of them are already planning to return during next year's fall break.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND RECREATION CAMPS

During the 2003 season, approximately 300 physical education and recreation majors participated in the outdoor education required camps at Camp Huntington and the Antlers Center. The camps were held during the months of January, May, June and August. Naturally, those fortunate enough to be enrolled in the June camps got to experience the Adirondack bird, "The Black Fly." The black flies seemed to be worse than normal (whatever normal is) this past spring. Perhaps it was due to the cool and rainy period. No black flies were reported during the January winter camp.

Many of the camp activities and skills taught are similar to those permanently etched into the minds of participants who attended more than 40 years ago. Some things have changed. Perhaps most notable is the way and what students eat on their trips. There are no more Bolton biscuits to chew on, fires to cook on or wanigans to tump. Freeze-dried food is now used and prepared on gas stoves. Food and gear are carried in dry bags or backpacks.

Some of the traditional trip routes still remain the same, but many new opportunities are available. Most of the groups canoe a specified route and may climb a mountain or two during their trip. Other groups elect to travel to the high peaks of the Adirondacks to hike and climb. Bears have always been a threat for getting into a group's food, but the likelihood has never been more prevalent than it has been at Marcy Dam. I think these bears went to "Bear Bag School."

The outdoor education experience at Raquette Lake for these two majors remains as strong as ever. In fact, we are anticipating close to 300 students again for the 2004 season.

## SUNY CORTLAND FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

Raymond Franco, vice president for student affairs, and Susan Wilson, assistant professor of recreation and leisure studies, arranged for their sections of SUNY Cortland's Freshman Experience Course (COR 101) to visit Camp Huntington in late September. The weather was good, the foliage was beautiful and the weekend was packed with outdoor activities and student leadership initiatives.

The students enrolled in Franco's course expressed an interest in student leadership. Judy Kopf, assistant director of student activities, led them in a variety of team building and problem solving activities. Wilson's section had students who expressed an interest in environmental and outdoor education. The COR 101 course is required for all SUNY Cortland freshmen. The students have the opportunity to enroll in a section which meets their personal objectives and interact with other students who share similar academic interests. I commend this initiative by Franco and Wilson. Too many times I have heard from alumni that they were not able to come to Raquette Lake until they were seniors. For some, "Camp" is their final course before graduation. Others had never been to Huntington or Antlers because their academic programs didn't take advantage of the Raquette Lake facilities.

Let's keep the students who are enrolled in the SUNY Cortland orientation courses coming to Raquette Lake. As most of us know, it is never too early to take advantage of what Raquette Lake has to offer. It is one of the college experiences that lives with you forever!

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE

For more than seven years, SUNY Cortland's International Student Program has provided the opportunity for our visiting students, faculty and administrators to come and experience one of the college's greatest treasures at Raquette Lake. John Ogden, director of the international studies program, and his staff offer a truly unique experience for these students who come from all over the world. In addition to the history of the camp itself, they have the opportunity to experience the pristine environment, hike on the trail system and canoe and kayak on the lake.



As part of their program each year, these students acquire and develop new personal skills. Tom Fuchs, instructor in physical education, conducts a workshop session on American Folk and Square Dance. Tom also instructs the students on the low ropes course, the climbing wall and rappelling down the tower.



### TOURS OF PINE KNOT

Over the past few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of groups that have toured the historic facilities at Pine Knot. Access is difficult so such events need to be scheduled far in advance. From youngsters to oldsters, they all come to see Durant's and Huntington's Adirondack retreat. This past summer, Camp Huntington hosted such groups as: The Adirondack Historical Society; County Historical Chapters; Elder Hostel; The Arts Guild of Old Forge; and guests from the W.W. Durant.

The W.W. Durant, a cruise boat captained by Dean Pohl, provides daily historical excursions on Raquette Lake. They also offer luncheon and dinner cruises in conjunction with a historical overview of the region. Some of the tours of Pine Knot are booked in conjunction with these W.W. Durant cruises. These tours are always planned during a time that would not interfere with programs being conducted at the camp.

### PINE KNOT: NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Over the past year, I have worked closely with William Krattinger, Historical Preservation Specialist with the New York State Office of Historical Preservation. During this period, we developed an application to change Camp Huntington's historical designation from a National Historic Site to a National Historic Landmark. This would be a significant upgrade for SUNY Cortland's Raquette Lake Outdoor Center.

On Sept. 10, 2003, the application was reviewed at the Northeast Regional Meeting of the National Park Service. Unofficially, the application was approved. With this endorsement, the next step is to have the application reviewed at the national level in Washington, D.C. If approved, it would then be signed into law by the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior.

Cortland has owned, operated and maintained the first Great Camp of the Adirondacks since 1948. Camp Pine Knot was developed by Thomas Durant and his son, William West Durant. When this recognition comes to fruition, SUNY Cortland will possess the only National Historic Landmark within the SUNY System. We owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Walter Thurber, a former faculty member, Harland "Gold" Metcalf, the Camp's first director, and Donald Smith, former college president, for their vision.

### PRESIDENT ERIK J. BITTERBAUM

Two days after President Bitterbaum officially began his duties as SUNY Cortland's 10th president, he and his family visited Raquette Lake. He was hosting the annual Presidential Retreat. He was joined by the members of his Cabinet, selected others and their families. The Provost, Elizabeth Davis-Russell, and her Advisory Council had just completed their Raquette Lake retreat and joined the president's group for the remainder of the week. Although this was a work session, the group enjoyed some free time at the camp. The attendees hiked or strolled four miles of trails, many canoed and kayaked, while some relaxed near the water's edge with a favorite book.

It was nice to see our new president, binoculars in hand, enjoying the early morning light and the birds perched high above in the trees. He commented on how nice it was to hear a loon again. I feel comfortable in saying that I felt President Bitterbaum was very impressed with Camp Huntington and is looking forward to spending many more days here during his tenure as SUNY Cortland's President.

### SPRUCE DORM RENOVATION: YOUR DOLLARS HELP!

The bids for the interior renovation of the Spruce Dorm have been awarded and construction has already begun. Last year, I developed and submitted a project alteration grant for the Spruce Dorm. The project was approved by the campus administration. Unfortunately, the financial amount identified for the project by the campus fell below the sum of the bids. With the help of the College and your contributions to the Cortland College Foundation Raquette Lake Fund, this project will be completed in the fall of 2003. Thank you all for your continued financial support!

The interior renovation has three components: constructing individual rooms to ensure user privacy; new baseboard hot water heating system; and two totally renovated bathrooms. The Raquette Lake staff is completing the construction of the walls and finishing the rooms once the wiring is done. Our involvement not only reflects commitment to the project, but also helps keep the cost down.

The Center hosts a course titled "Adirondack Winter Studies" during the period between New Year's and the beginning of classes in January. The Spruce Dorm will be operational for this first 2004 winter group. Also, for the first time, students enrolled in this class will come from not only SUNY Cortland, but SUNY Oneonta as well.

### ALUMNI STRIKE AGAIN!

This past September, the Class of '59 once again found its way back to Raquette Lake. A few of its organizers, Don and Donna Traver, Doug and Sandra Kessler, arrived a day early to volunteer a days worth of work. They not only spent the whole day clearing raspberry bushes, trees and weeds, but also found the time to finish ridding all of the remnants! The welcoming sign and the rock wall surrounding the main Antlers lodge are now beautifully visible. Their hard work was greatly appreciated.

## 2003 SUMMER ALUMNI SESSIONS: JUST FANTASTIC!

Once again, Camp Huntington and the Antler's Center hosted a number of summer alumni sessions. Participants came from all over the United States. Perhaps the family that came the greatest distance was the Halpers from Los Angeles, Calif.



There were a number of new families this year as well as some of the seasoned veteran alumni. They all took advantage of Raquette Lake's resources. They swam, fished, boated, hiked, explored and birded. Many chose to take advantage of nearby attractions such as the Adirondack Museum, Water Park in Old Forge, Winter Olympic facilities in Lake Placid or just shopping in the area stores and boutiques.

The desire of Cortland Alumni to return to Raquette Lake in the summer of 2004 will remain strong so please complete your application and get it in the mail. No early reservations will be taken. Due to the demand for these summer sessions, we will continue to use the lottery procedure for each of the sessions at Huntington and the Antlers. Rhonda and I are looking forward to seeing you this summer. Good Luck!

### THE KIRBY CAMP

The 2003 summer season at the Kirby Camp was a huge success. The first party to use the renovated facility was Al Stockholm and his wife, Missy; Jack Emmer and his wife, Joan; and Chuck Winters and his wife, Suzi. Each of the groups indicated that they plan on returning in 2004.

The rental fee assessed for the use of the camp will be used to continue the renovation. Our plan is to use some of the proceeds to purchase a composting toilet. The new toilet will still be located "out back" but it will be much more user friendly.

Each of the user groups commented on how peaceful Kirby Camp was during the summer. They enjoyed sitting on the front porch watching both deer and bear that passed by and listening to the loons. A picture was taken of the bear and it was the same young bear that had been sighted at Camp Huntington earlier in June.

An outside company was contracted to come in and assess the condition of the fireplaces and the chimneys. Their inspection confirmed my initial thoughts that these were not safe to use in their existing condition. I am now waiting for an estimate for the cost of the needed repairs.

There are still weeks available for the 2004 summer and early fall season. If you are interested in renting the Kirby Camp, please call (607) 753-5488.

### EAGLES, FOXES, BEARS and MOOSE

As always, there is an abundance of wildlife at Camp Huntington, however, this was a very special summer. Historically, groups

have seen deer, turkeys, ducks, loons, and an occasional mink, otter and beaver. This summer was special because we had bald eagles, red foxes, black bears and moose at the Outdoor Center.

Perhaps the eagles were the most significant. There was an adult bald eagle and a eaglet. I saw them last fall in the top of a dead pine tree located in the back bay. During the summer, I estimate I saw them 20-30 times. The latest sighting was during the new faculty orientation held here by the provost in October. For many, it was their first sighting of our national symbol. I do not believe they are nesting on Raquette Lake.

Individuals who stayed at the Antlers this past summer had the pleasure of watching a family of red foxes. There were two adults and two kits. The mother has a den not too far from the Antlers Casino. Consequently, they came by frequently looking for a handout. One late evening I was sitting near the Casino porch waiting for a party to take over to Huntington when one of the foxes came over and sat down right next to me. They were always leery, but not really afraid of people.



This was also the summer of the bear. We had six different bears in camp over the summer months. They never found anything to eat or to get into so they would just investigate and then wander away. Various individuals encountered bears near the Chalet, Staff House and the Dining Hall. One day when I was conducting a tour and we were out on the House Boat, A woman in the group looked up on a ridge not 50 yards away and thought she saw a bear. She asked me, "Is that a bear?" I looked and said, "No, it is two bears!"

Although we did not see the moose, he or she left its tracks close to the sauna and again near the four corners on the Blue Mountain Road. This moose was apparently just passing through. There is little in the way of aquatic vegetation that would keep a moose on or near Long Point. Even in passing, it is nice to know the reintroduction of the moose has reached SUNY Cortland's Camp Huntington.

### CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I would like to once again thank you for your financial gifts to the Cortland College Foundation Raquette Lake Fund. Without your contributions, we would be unable to accomplish many of our program and facility objectives. During my brief tenure as director, we have used "your" money to support programs by purchasing new equipment; renovating the interior of the Kirby Camp; beginning the restoration of the Glass Dining Room; purchasing laptop computers for the Carlson Classroom; and acquiring new maintenance equipment. The entire staff at Raquette Lake thanks every one of you for your continued support.

John Mosser has replaced Jim Boyle as the vice president for institutional advancement. When John visited Raquette Lake this summer, he quickly sensed the importance of such a unique resource. I feel John, like Jim Boyle, will become a strong advocate for Raquette Lake and what it represents. In the spring newsletter, I will be announcing some specific funding initiatives we are currently discussing. Stay tuned!

## AT ANTLERS: B IS FOR BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLY...

During field biology class held at Antlers this past summer, Marjorie Weiland decided to do a project on Monarch caterpillars. Before Marjorie left, she asked me to feed her very tiny caterpillars and release them when they were ready. I agreed. As various groups visited Antlers, they helped to feed and care for the caterpillars. Marjorie left me in the care of six caterpillars...they doubled in numbers! Folks in the various groups helped gather the milkweed to feed these vibrant colored critters and during food collection more caterpillars would be found.

Twelve were collected, however, I could only account for eight. A sixth grade group from Bolton Central School was visiting and found the other four. You guessed it, in the mailboxes! The mailboxes made the perfect home protected from weather.



Ted Caldwell, lead teacher with both Newcomb and Bolton Schools, just happened to have butterfly tags with him. Two chrysalises hatched while the Newcomb School was here. He demonstrated how to tag and release the monarchs, leaving behind enough tags for the rest of the butterflies. I have tagged the rest of the butterflies and watched most of them fly off over the lake making their way to warmer weather. When found, the tags are sent to the Biology Department at the University of Kansas and they, in turn, send you a notice of where and when your tagged butterfly was found. We will keep you posted if we hear back from any of our beautiful butterflies. For more information on monarchs visit [www.monarchwatch.org](http://www.monarchwatch.org).

## CAN YOU HELP?

Several people over the past year or two have recommended I develop a want/need list for Raquette Lake. Their suggestions implied that there might be an alumnus who has or knows of someone who has some of these items. For now, I am requesting three very unique items which play a significant role in the history of the Adirondacks and Camp Pine Knot.

First, a "small" wood cook stove or replica for Mrs. Durant's Houseboat, the Barque. At one time, there was one located in the kitchen area. The stove was used to warm and prepare meals for those staying on the houseboat while it was anchored in the South Bay.

Second, a full-sized black bear rug in good condition to replace the one located in front of the fireplace in the Joe Pierson Room of the Chalet. The current bear rug is in very poor condition. It has a tremendous appeal to the various visitors touring the facility.

Third, a mature bull moose mount to be used for educational purposes at the Center. Years ago the moose was quite common in this region. Over time, they were hunted to extinction in the Adirondacks and areas of New England. The moose has been

reintroduced to the Adirondacks and Long Point. The current collection of indigenous wildlife, found in the Fuge Dining Hall, helps visitors become familiar with the wildlife native to the region.

The support of SUNY Cortland alumni and friends of Raquette Lake have helped sustain this facility since 1948. If you are unable to help with these items, but wish to contribute to the Center, you can certainly do so. Check may be made payable to: Cortland College Foundation, Raquette Lake Fund. These donations are tax-deductible and help tremendously with our budget shortfall.

## HURRICANE ISABEL

In any given year, SUNY Cortland's Outdoor Education facilities at Raquette Lake experience a number of severe storm and weather conditions. This may range from a high forest fire danger during the summer season to high winds and sub-freezing temperatures in the fall. Although the temperature was well above freezing when hurricane Isabel hit Raquette Lake, we still encountered weather conditions seldom experienced by Huntington visitors.

Isabel's 50 mph plus high winds created waves on the lake up to three to four feet high. On that particular Friday, more than 50 people were scheduled for the weekend at the Huntington facility. This high number of participants and their gear required us to make three round trips with the large, 40-foot barge, the "Barque II." Safety is always our primary concern. Bill James, our new caretaker, and I felt confident we could transport the group safely advising them of the safety procedures and the location of personal floating devices. I knew as we departed the most difficult part was going to be leaving the Antler's docking area and then docking at Huntington. The gusting winds would exert quite a force on the high profile barge. The waves were breaking over the bow and many of the passengers were soaked with spray. The southern winds were so severe that I could not come into the main docking area. Consequently, I had to bring the barge into the back bay which was no easy task. Needless to say, everyone who made that trip had a ride they will not soon forget.

The high winds created the typical problems one would associate with such a storm. Power was interrupted for more than eight hours. Fortunately, Huntington has the ability to generate its own power which allows us to provide the necessary services. You can only imagine the problems associated with 50 people and no functional bathrooms or the ability to prepare meals. Actually, we were much better off than those on the mainland who were without power.



